

Message Text

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47

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5248

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS BEIRUT 8794

3.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, LE

SUBJECT: PRESS COVERAGE OF ABDUCTION OF COL. MORGAN

1. PRESS COVERAGE OF MORGAN CASE FOCUSED TODAY ON STATEMENTS OF QUOTE COMMAND OF PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION UNQUOTE AND QUOTE PALESTINIAN FRONT OF FORCES REJECTING SURRENDERIST SOLUTIONS UNQUOTE, BOTH PREVIOUSLY REPORTED BY SEPTELS, AND ON BITS AND PIECES OF INVESTIGATION AND SPECULATION.

2. ACCORDING TO LEADING INDEPENDENT "AN-NAHAR", INTERIOR MINISTER/FORMER PRESIDENT CHAMOUN TOLD REPORTERS YESTERDAY THAT QUOTE IT APPEARS THAT MORGAN'S KIDNAPPERS ARE LEBANESE UNQUOTE AND, WHEN ASKED IF USG HAD ASKED ANYTHING OF LEBANON REGARDING COLONEL, THAT QUOTE WE HAVE RECEIVED NOTHING UNQUOTE.

3. "AN-NAHAR" QUOTES INFORMED SOURCES AND LEADING PRO-EGYPTIAN "AL-ANWAR" QUOTES PALESTINIAN SOURCES TO EFFECT THAT COL. MORGAN WAS STILL ALIVE AS OF LAST NIGHT. "AN-NAHAR" ALSO QUOTES INFORMED SOURCES TO EFFECT THAT QUOTE EMBASSY OF WEST EUROPEAN STATE IN BEIRUT HAS PLAYED IMPORTANT ROLE IN THIS CASE BY TRANSMITTING SOME CONDITIONS -- WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN DISCLOSED -- TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT TO ASSURE RELEASE OF KIDNAPPED UNCLASSIFIED

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COLONEL UNQUOTE.

4. ON ISSUE OF DEMANDS, "AN-NAHAR" QUOTES INFORMED SOURCES AS SAYING QUOTE AMERICAN AUTHORITIES DID NOT RESPOND TO CONDITIONS OF KIDNAPPERS AND SO INFORMED COMPETENT LEBANESE AUTHORITIES UNQUOTE. BY CONTRAST, LEADING PRO-PLO "AL-MUHARRIR" STATES QUOTE IT WAS UNDERSTOOD YESTERDAY AFTERNOON THAT THE AMERICANS HAD, VIA THEIR EMBASSY IN BEIRUT, SHOWN A WILLINGNESS TO ACCEDE TO DEMANDS OF KIDNAPPERS AND TO STUDY MEANS OF CARRYING OUT THE CONDITIONS IN EXCHANGE FOR RETURN OF COLONEL MORGAN, BUT THAT LEBANESE OFFICIALS HAD EXPRESSED THEIR RESERVATIONS OVER SUCH A STEP AND REQUESTED MORE TIME TO GET MORGAN BACK WITHOUT CARRYING OUT THE CONDITIONS UNQUOTE. LEADING INDEPENDENT WEEKLY "AL-HAWADITH" CARRIED SIMILAR SPECULATION. INDEPENDENT "AL-BAYRAQ" ATTRIBUTED SIMILAR RESERVATIONS TO PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP: QUOTE REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND REJECTED EXECUTION OF ANY OF THE CONDITIONS AND INSISTED ON NECESSITY FOR KIDNAPPED COLONEL'S SURRENDER WITHOUT RESTRICTION OR CONDITION UNQUOTE. GODLEY

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